- Universal retention by 2010.
- Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life.

Consequent upon implementation of the SSA since 2001-02, a large number of children have been brought in the fold of School Education. The number of out of school children in the country has declined from 320 lakh in 2001-02 to 70 lakh in 2006-07, as per State Reports.

(f) to (h) The SSA is being implemented to achieve the aim of universalisation of elementary education in a time bound manner by 2010.

A rigorous system of monitoring of the Sarva Shiksa Abhiyan has been put in place to obtain feedback on the progress of the programme.

During 2007-08 a B.E. of Rs. 10671 crore has been provided for the SSA programme to further its progress.

Setting up of new universities

92. MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to set up 30 new universities for expanding access to higher education in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof, indicating the universities that would be set up in Orissa;

(c) whether it is also proposed to set up 6,000 quality schools, one in each block of the country, to secure excellence in public schooling; and

(d) if so, the details thereof, indicating *inter-alia,* those that are proposed to be set up in Orissa?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) and (b) Subject to the finalization of the Eleventh Five Year Plan, it is proposed to establish one Central University in each of the 16 States, including Orissa, which do not have any Central University. In addition, 14 World Class Universities are also proposed to be established as Central Universities, details of which are yet to be worked out.

(c) and (d) The proposal in this regard is only at the conceptual stage.

Education in the National Common Minimum Programme

93. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the details of steps initiated by Government to fulfil the promises made in the National Common Minimum Programme in regard to education;

(b) whether the Right to Education, enshrined in the Constitution, has been fulfilled;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps taken to provide free and compulsory education to children?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) The steps initiated by the Government to fulfil the promises made in the National Common Minimum Programme including the following:—

1. 2% cess on Central taxes was introduced to fund education in the year 2004-05. An additional 1% cess exclusively earmarked to finance Higher and Secondary education has been introduced from the year 2007-08. With these steps public spending on Education has increased from 3.49% in the year 2003-04 to 3.66% (provisional) in the year 2005-06.

2. An action plan has been prepared for implementing the recommendations of a CABE Committee on measures to enhance the autonomy of higher education institutions and to institutionalize regulatory provisions for promoting autonomy and accountability of higher educational institutions. Powers to enter into MoUs with foreign universities have been restored to all Universities. Government has reintroduced the Block Grants scheme to IITs and IIMs to restore their financial autonomy. It has also been decided that participation in the All India Engineering Entrance Examination would not be mandatory for all institutions. Government has further established transparency and autonomy in the processes of selection of senior faculty in institutions such as the Indian Council of Philosophical Research, Indian Council of Social Sciences Research, Indian Institute of Historical Research and the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla.

3. The National Curriculum Framework 2005 has been revised to subscribe to the principles of secularism, democracy and equality stated in the Constitution and in the National Policy on Education.

4. A Mid-Day Meal Programme was introduced in schools in 2004-05, benefiting 12 crore children studying in classes I-V in Govt., Govt. aided and local body schools, as well as centres run under Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS)/ Alternative & Innovative Education (AIE) scheme in all States/UTs. From 2007-08 the scheme will be extended to cover children in upper primary (classes V to VIII) in educationally backward blocks in the country.

(b) to (d) Universal Elementary Education has not yet been fully achieved; however, the Government implements a number of schemes mainly Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Mid-Day Meal (MDM) Programme in association with the State/UT Governments to provide free education to children in the 6 to 14 years age group and ensure their universal retention. 3.68 crore children have joined schools since the launch of SSA in 2001 and the number of out-of-school children has reduced from about 3.20 crores in the year 2001-02 to about 70 lakhs in the year 2006-07.

Expenditure on education

94. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) what is the percentage of GDP towards higher education, primary and middle education during the last three years;